how to organise a fan club

Fan Clubs are big business these days. So many new artistes are jumping on the band-wagon that clubs are springing up virtually overnight. But what's it really like to run a club? Do you really get that close to the star you run it for? It can happen . . . even if they're American stars, possibly six thousand miles away on the other side of the Atlantic and only rarely visit these shores . . .

NOW THAT REALLY IS SOMETHING TO DO say's FAB'S SHEENA MACKAY. . . .

Phil Everly, younger half of The Everly Brothers, yaks to Fab's Sheena during his 1963 visit. She joined the Everly Brothers' fan club way back in January 1959, paid 7s. and received a membership kit which consisted of an 8 in. by 10 in. photo, a post-card size autographed photo, a detailed biography, a membership card, metal pin-on badge and a letter from Don and Phil welcoming her to the club.

As a member of the Everlys' Fan Club I was sent some newsletters, or magazines—good value for my 7s. entrance fee.

In September that same year the then President, Yvonne Frost, asked me if I would like to take over the Secretary's job, which had fallen vacant. I jumped at the chance. I didn't know then how much hard work went into the club.

A year or so later we had our first fan club dance. We filled the Caxton Hall, London S.W.1, with three beat groups and a capacity crowd of 600. It was a most successful dance.

But what a lot of work sending out tickets, organising a bar and a buffet, getting the groups, organising transport, getting posters and advertising out. Phew! Was I glad when it was all over.

Lots of good things can come from running a fan club. Friends most of all. That's how I met my fellow FAB mate, June Southworth, 'cos she runs Bobby Darin's fan club. Another mate, Helen Brown, who ran the Johnny Cash club has gone to live in the States and who did she meet out there? Johnny Cash, of course. Janet Martin, now Mrs. Buddy Britten, went to work for Roy Orbison in Nashville, when she was President of Roy's British Fan Club.

Don't think that running a club is easy. Most of the time it's hard slog. Have you ever written thousands of envelopes by hand and then had to lick them all to seal them down! Oh, it's a hard life.

If you are thinking of starting a club the first thing to do is ask the star in question if he/she already has a club. If so don't start a rival one, but plough all your energies into supporting the main club.

Once you have official permission from the star concerned to form a club, you have to get hold of photographs, and find a printer to print stationery, membership cards, newsletters etc. This can be expensive if you're not careful—and you can finish up out of pocket unless you get estimates before you order.

Do work at least one evening per week on all the mail because once you get behind you never catch up. The letters keep coming in even if you don't work on them! Keep an account of what money comes in for fees and what goes out on running expenses. They should balance at the end of the year.

Try to make the club interesting by having outings, meetings, competitions with nice prizes. You just can't fail. So get cracking and keep the fans happy.

As long as you can stand the hard, *hard* work that is involved.

Beatle loot

Every picture tells a story, but there's really no need to introduce the four dishy boys in pictures on the right—only the toys! They're all gifts, sent to The Beatles Fan Club office. Almost every day gifts such as fluffy bears, shirts, ties, jumpers, records, and of course the illustrious jelly babies, find their way into the Beatles Fan Club. Now livestock is added, for John received a kitten on his birthday last year. The Beatles Fan Club is very expertly run. The joint Secretaries are Bettina Rose and Anne Collingham, but they are helped by forty area secretaries. When you first apply to the club you receive a Membership Card, a handwritten letter from The Beatles, a newsletter from the Secretaries, and a 10 × 8 glossy autographed pic of the boys. At Christmas records are issued with the boys extending Christmas greetings to their fans. All this for the annual fee of 5s.

To date there are 70,000 members of the International Fan Club operated here, but there are Clubs in every other part of the world. It is probably the largest Fan Club in the world—which isn't really surprising.